

CHAPTER 4 Environmental Analysis

4.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE ANALYSIS

This chapter contains a discussion of the possible environmental effects of the Murdy Commons project (proposed project) for the specific issue areas that were identified through the Initial Study process as having the potential to experience significant impacts. This chapter is the primary component of the EIR, as it provides information on the existing conditions of the project site, the type and magnitude of the project's potential individual and cumulative environmental impacts, and feasible mitigation measures that could reduce or avoid such impacts. Mitigation measures are designed to reduce a project's potential impact to less than significant levels. The purpose of this section is to inform readers of the type and magnitude of the project's environmental impacts and how such impacts would affect the existing environment.

The proposed project site is located within Town Center Neighborhood and the Town Center Core districts of the Beach and Edinger Corridors Specific Plan (BECSP) area. The extent and intensity of all anticipated development activity within the BECSP area, including the proposed project, has been identified in the Specific Plan and analyzed at a programmatic level in the certified program-level Environmental Impact Report No. 08-008 for the BECSP. As part of the program EIR a traffic study, noise study, air quality study, and utilities analysis, including a Water Supply assessment was completed. The Program EIR also evaluated land use, aesthetics, biological resources, cultural resources, hydrology and water quality, public services, recreation and hazards and hazardous materials. Mitigation measures included as part of the Program EIR required to mitigate potentially significant impacts associated with future development were incorporated into the BECSP as Appendix A and are a requirement of all development projects within the BECSP area.

As the proposed project is located within the BECSP area (plan area), proposed development is required to be consistent with the BECSP, including the maximum amount of new development established in Section 2.1.1 of the BECSP and be within the scope of the Program EIR. In order to obtain approval of the proposed project, consistency with the BECSP Program EIR must be demonstrated. For certain issues areas, components of the proposed project are substantially similar to what was analyzed in the BECSP EIR and do not require substantial additional analysis.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the following resources were determined to require substantial additional analysis due to the fact that with implementation of the required mitigation measures potentially significant impacts would occur, or additional, project-level analysis was not previously completed. Therefore, detailed analysis of the following resources is provided for in Chapter 4:

- Aesthetics/Visual Quality
- Air Quality
- Noise
- Public Services
- Recreation

- Transportation/Traffic
- Utilities/Service Systems

The assessment of each issue area begins with a discussion of the existing conditions (or setting), as well as a discussion of the regulatory framework relevant to that issue area. As required by the CEQA Guidelines, this document discusses any inconsistencies between the proposed project and applicable City of Huntington Beach General Plan policies and regional plans. However, consistent with the scope and purpose of this document, the discussion primarily focuses on those requirements adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect and an assessment of whether any inconsistency with these standards creates a significant physical impact on the environment. The ultimate determination of whether this project is consistent with the City's General Plan is a decision that resides exclusively with the City, not with this environmental document.

Following the setting is a discussion of the project's impacts relative to the issue area. Within the impact analysis, the first subsection identifies the methodologies used and the "Thresholds of Significance," which are those criteria used to determine whether potential effects are significant. A "significant effect" is defined by Section 15382 of the CEQA Guidelines as "a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air, water, or ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment, but may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant." The next subsection programmatically describes each impact of the proposed project, code requirements and mitigation measures for significant impacts, and the level of significance after mitigation.

The City of Huntington Beach imposes standard code requirements (CRs) for the purpose of controlling or reducing potential environmental and/or safety issues associated with a proposed project. These CRs may include, but are not necessarily limited to, development standards, infrastructure improvements, and/or operational requirements. In this EIR, standard CRs that are relevant to the environmental analysis are identified along with the discussion of mitigation measures in each resource-specific discussion provided in Chapter 3 (Project Description) of this document. CRs often have the effect of reducing an environmental impact, and as such, take the place of mitigation measures that would otherwise be required to address impacts. CRs identified in this document are not inclusive of all code requirements that would be imposed on the proposed project; only those CRs relevant to the environmental analysis are included.

The impact analysis concludes with a discussion of cumulative effects, which evaluates the impacts associated with the proposed project in conjunction with other past, present, and probable future development in areas causing related impacts.

4.0.1 Resource Areas Not Requiring Substantial New Analysis

As discussed in Chapter 1, based on a preliminary environmental analysis of the proposed project prepared prior to commencement of this EIR, and a review of the BECSP EIR, it was determined that with implementation of the required mitigation measures substantial additional analysis was not needed for the following resource areas:

- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use
- Population and Housing
- Climate Change

Each of these resource areas has a stand-alone section that includes a discussion of the current environmental setting, the proposed project and its relationship to the BECSP, where applicable; a discussion of consistency with the environmental analysis prepared for the BECSP, where applicable; any new information or analysis pertinent to the current analysis and identification of impacts; identification of mitigation measures required to address potential impacts of the proposed project; and significance conclusions regarding the proposed project after mitigation incorporation. Mitigation measures included applicable measures from the BECSP EIR as well as any new or additional mitigation measures required to reduce potential impacts. All impacts are considered to be less than significant with incorporation of mitigation.

